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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

SARAH BERNHARDT AT HOME.

BY MAURICE GUILLEMOT.



bouquets of violets, with a subdued perfume; large vases of

AN it be the luxurious, exotic den of a queen from a far off and savage country? or, is it the picturesque, original studio, very fantastic, of an artist without peer? Or, is it the boudoir, very modern, very *coquet* and charming, of a fashionable *Parisienne*?

Yes, there is something of all these elements in Sarah Bernhardt's studio.

On the red tinted Arianople tapestry on the walls, are suspended Indian weapons, Mexican hats, umbrellas from Chili, made of feathers, Japanese chimeras and fougousas, figured with monsters in gold. There are silk tapestries, embroidered with floral arabesques, while everywhere there are flowers. There are bouquets of roses, whose ribbons frou-frou when carried about;

desk, the white, delicate flesh of the arm in vivid contrast with the hoary hue of the page, which, illuminated by mediæval monks, and bound in figured leather, is reflected in the large mirror, hung on the wall immediately behind it. Or else, again, seated in a curious Arab armchair, her blonde head shaded with the large spindle-shaped leaves of a gigantic palm tree, whose radiations stripe the deep perspective of the apartment, while at her feet, with his large head caressing the hand that flatters him is her enormous dog, Osman, with gray hair, cravatted in steel.

She is there, Sarah, the charmer, she is there in all her undulating and artistic poses. Her hair of crisp gold, makes, with the fairness of her complexion, the smile of her eyes, and of her teeth, a scale of soft colors that completes the harmony of her dress of white plush, tied to the waist very low.

Her blue eyes, that can smile so sweetly, become at times strangely hard, when the speaker becomes animated, and abandons herself to her dislikes, her scorn or her hatred. She is then no more the charming apparition just described. She then becomes a tigress to defend herself; she claws, she bites, she tears, she is without pity, without mercy, and is extremely violent. Do you think she is bad? No. Do you think she is good? No. She is just like ordinary human nature, rendering good for good, and evil for evil. She puts all her soul into it, and, bless me! she is passionate.

Must we not forgive her, however, for defending herself so rigorously? She only replies to the attacks made upon her by



STUDIO OF SARAH BERNHARDT. (Looking South.)

chrysanthemums; rare orchids, entangled with impromptu cuttings of prickly holly, dotted with little red balls.

Reclining on an immense divan, which is surmounted by a canopy, upheld by staffs covered with garnet velvet, with capitals of snakes in bronze relief, is the enchantress herself. The divan is entirely covered with a bed of cushions, whereon are strewn the multiplied furs of bears, beavers, alligators and buffaloes, while the back of same is decorated with an infinite number of young tiger skins, sewn together. On the wall above are disposed, in trophy fashion, arrows, lances, sabres, guns, etc., above which is the helmet of a Hindoo warrior, having for a crest a winged fish in gilt copper.

If not reclining in a den like this, she will be found standing leaning her elbow on an old missal, supported by a wooden

envious, unsuccessful, strolling players, or the attacks of counterband blue stockings, anxious to sap her pedestal. Besides, why should she not be triumphant, possessing, as she does, the very qualities that the envious deny her. As she wittily says, she "pays cash down" for her fame. She possesses undoubted genius. She has a strange beauty—she is always young, and then, she is always Sarah.

What matters the bites of the pamphleteers? Does she not make us forget all their animosity when we witness the enthusiastic ovation given her at the first scene of "La Tosca;" that unanimous acclamation of the whole house standing, quivering, before the fascinating artist, who appears in her graceful pink toilet, the golden disorder of her hair hidden by a green cap with lace borders, and in her hand a tall cane with curving

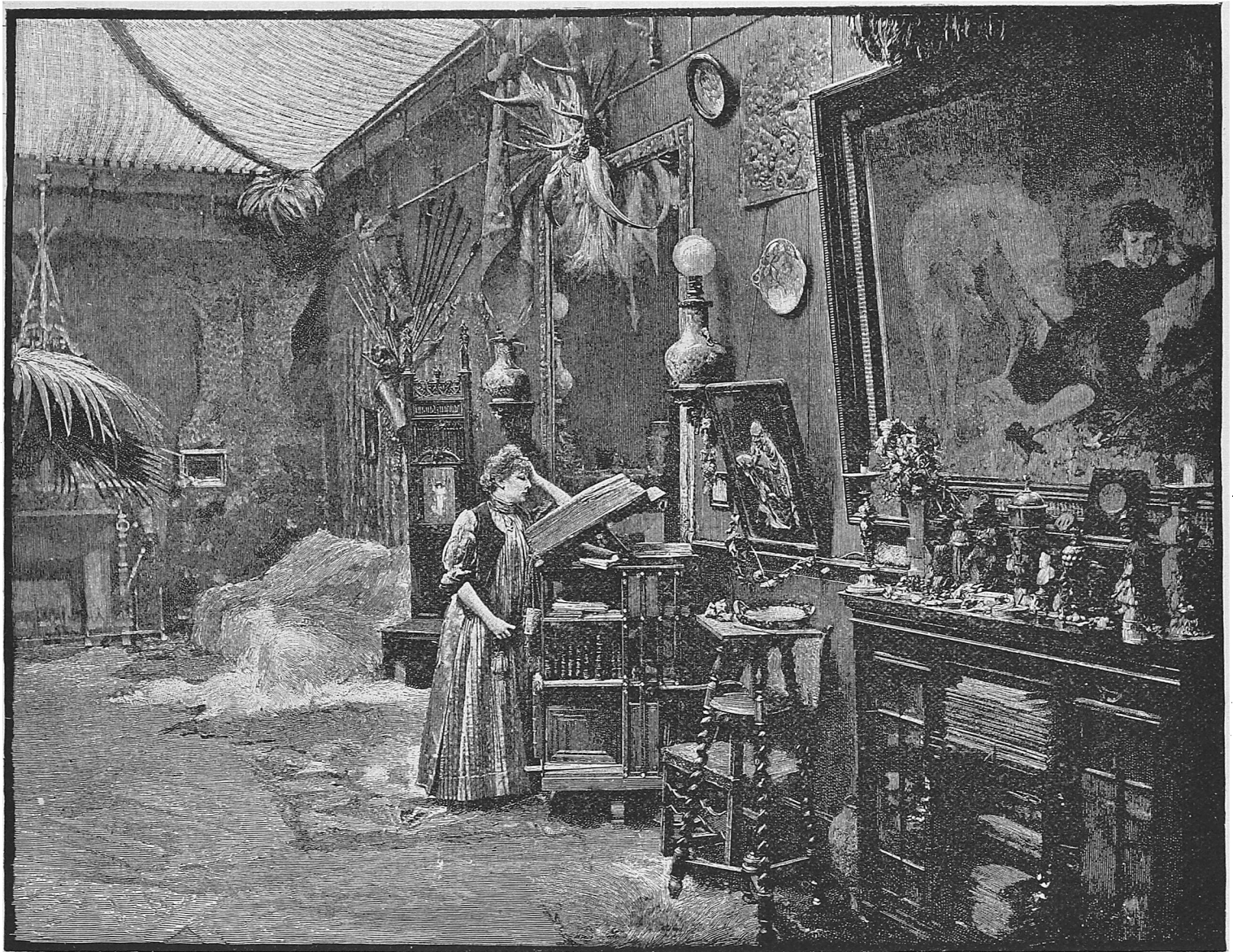
THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

handle. And the enthusiasm lasts right through the piece, interrupting its progress. The audience becomes indescribably excited; emotional even to squeezing of one's temples, even to the extent of throwing fans, opera glasses, a little of everything on the stage, as they do in Spain, while she, with a tufted bouquet of flowers on her breast, is bowing happy, completely happy, the spoiled and cherished child of the Parisian public.

The English liken her to a genial gypsy. She is possessed of talent, and when we have once undergone the seduction of her wiles, we can understand the meaning of the cartoon, by Robida, entitled "The Conquest of America by Sarah Bernhardt." During her first visit to the Western hemisphere, the Parisian papers were full of marvelous accounts of her experiences in the New World. As the story went, a project was formed in one of the northern cities of the United States to kidnap her, and give her up only under a heavy ransom. After one of her performances

with a Russian Princess. The marriage feast in her house was joyous. It was held in a dining room that has paintings on the wall by Abbema, Butin, Clairin, Duez, Escalier, Robida, Bethune, Gavarni, Giacomelli, Fichel and Detaille, with the large chandelier of forged iron, garlanded with holly, and the tables lurdened with the thousand and one presents sent by the people. There were chalices, goblets and jugs of all shapes and colors, in every kind of metal. The little drawing-room was filled with guests, as also the little Japanese salon, separated therefrom by a Japanese curtain of mobile beads, flexible and restless, making, when one passes through them, a cheerful sound as of castenets striking against each other. This suite of three rooms forms the habitual scenery of the mistress of the house—namely, the little drawing-room, the Japanese salon, and the studio.

The little drawing-room is a sort of intimate museum, where is to be seen a bust of Regina, Sarah's young sister, who died



STUDIO OF SARAH BERNHARDT. (Looking North.)

she left the theatre, under a veritable escort, with her son beside her, revolver in hand, to frustrate the machinations of the enemy. There is also a story of Sarah engaged in an alligator hunt in Florida. The boat she sat in was absolutely carried on the backs of the scaly monsters, and Sarah succeeding in killing one of them with a ball between the eyes from her revolver.

She brought back alligator hides to make pocket books, portfolios, flat-purses, etc., for her friends. The enumeration would be a long one of the various experiences of Sarah in the West, and she proposes to embody them in her *Memoirs*, a book which she has begun, and which will soon be published, and one that will be strangely interesting.

In the work referred to, she will, without doubt, speak of the event that took place in the little church, on the Avenue Victor Hugo, which celebrated the marriage of her son Maurice

in her bloom, a marble of Sarah herself, and a bust of Maurice Bernhardt, by Mathieu Meusnier. There are flowers, painted in oil colors by Sarah, a rough sketch by Stevens, and a marvelous Japanese enamel, representing a young man with a beard and hair in an aureola of flame, being transported across rocks, with clouds around him, struggling in the hallucination of seeing the ethereal forms of women, the love victims of this Oriental Don Juan.

Descending the steps, between the Japanese monsters that guard the portal of the salon, we find ourselves in the studio before referred to. In addition to the trophies already described, there is a large picture of Maurice when a child, lying down, playing with two hounds, while above the mantelpiece is a portrait of Sarah, both by Clairin. At the back of a high wooden chair, where one may read the motto "*Quand Meme*,"

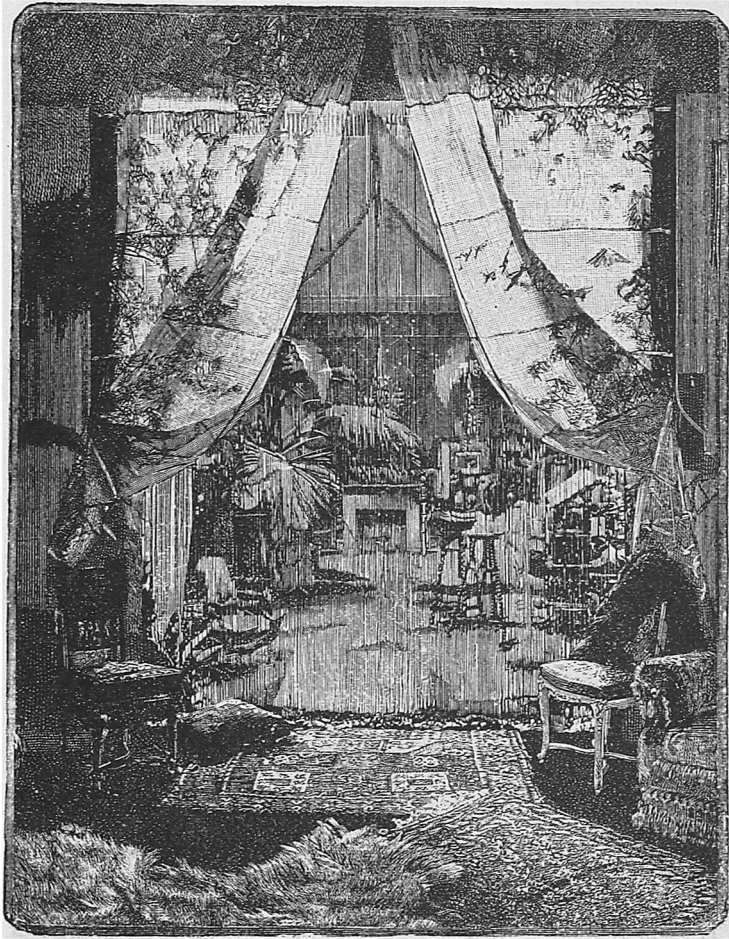
THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

HISTORIC DECORATION.—I.

BY PAUL ROVAIX.

is an exquisite miniature representing an idol, in hieratic robes, flying. There are chests encumbered with gew-gaws, credence tables supporting pottery, caskets of jewels, cabinets full of books, pamphlets and portfolios. There are chairs of all sorts and shapes, serving as easels for pictures. Here is an aquarelle by Doré, there a fan by Bethune, there two birds by Giacomelli, there paintings of peasants by Fichel, soldiers by Detaille, and ragamuffins by Gavarni. There is a marble statuette by Rachel, and there are chimeras in bronze, and comic groups in clay from Mexico. But we must put a stop to this inventory.

"You see, here is a statue of cupid leaning on a scythe that I have chiseled," said Sarah. "I will put death behind it, shall I not? I must put it there. Here, also is a man's head close to the head of a woman. These are the victims, you understand." And with the pretty arch gesture of a spirited child, Sarah was explaining to us the details of the little statue she was at work upon, and, as she spoke, we thought her so undulating, so feline, so charming in her morning custom of



IN THE JAPANESE SALON.

mauve plush, that she, also could be portrayed as a cupid with her cruel scythe, with innumerable victims heaped up around her, with the hearts of dreamers, of poets and artists, for whom, in the dull sky of the commonplace, she is the resplendent star.

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EVERY artist brings into the practice of his art his particular temperament, his individual turn of mind, his conception of the ideal, the qualities of his imagination, the memories more or less clearly defined of the medium of ideas, sensations and feelings in which he has lived.

Works can, therefore, serve to retrace the individuality of him who created them; from their examination can be singled out certain peculiarities, certain differences, which distinguish him from other artists, and constitute his originality. For this the view of a single work would be insufficient; but all of them must be considered as a whole, their elements must be noted, as well as the motives and details that are reproduced through them, and a search must be made through the variety of materials, of forms and of objects which those works present, those among them for which the artist appears to have had a special preference, end which he has been most willing to repeat.

To discover the wanted manner of an artist in the multiplicity of works which have come from his hands, to mark out this recurrence of similar or analogous decorative features, is to reconstitute his style.

As in literature the style of one writer differs from the style of another in that he expresses the same ideas in a different manner, so a cabinet of Boule differs from another by Caffieri; and the style of Bérain is not the same of the decorator Meissonnier.

What is true of individuals is also true of respective periods.

Each period expresses through its decorative arts its peculiar temperament, its turn of thought, its conception of the ideal, and reflects the general tendencies of the public mind.

If the works of a period be examined as a whole, certain tendencies, certain preferences for some particular materials, some special forms, some distinctive effects, are found to have preponderance over the others. To group these analogies, these resemblances, is to reconstitute and establish the style of that period.

So it will be found that the works of the time Louis XV. have in common certain peculiarities of materials, of forms and effects, which together will furnish a conception of the style Louis XV.

There are then the style of the individual and the style of the period.

The community of institutions, manners, history, language and ideas, constitutes the temperament of the people, of a race, of a civilization, whence comes forth a third style, characteristic not of an individual or of a period, but of a people through the whole course of time, as, for instance, the Arabian style.

Style is merely an abstraction. Pure, absolute style does not exist in reality. A work belongs to one style rather than to another, but there does not exist, for instance, a work in the style of Louis XVI. which may be considered as this style itself, and in which no element foreign to style Louis XVI. can be found.

Certain styles, in which a nascent style becomes discretely mingled with that which is declining, are called mixed styles, or styles of transition; for instance, the style "Régence," at the beginning of the eighteenth century, is a transition between the styles Louis XIV. and Louis XV.

A style can be identified by its characteristics, which may be reduced to four: Characteristic Impression; Characteristic Geometric Scheme; Characteristic Materials; Ornamentation.

Ornamentation gives us the simplest indications; impression is the most refined, the subtlest characteristic.

It must be observed that when we are in the presence of a work of some given style, this work impresses us at the outset in a peculiar manner which, vague as it is, awakens in our minds a presumption tending to the determination of its style.

Our next impression is that of its form as a whole.

The materials which have been brought together in its composition will furnish valuable indications of the period to which it belongs. For instance, porcelain, mahogany, &c., do not make their appearance in the decorative arts before a certain date.

The characteristic of ornamentation, although the most important, only follows the other three, and comes after the feeling produced, the design of the whole, and the nature of the materials.

(To be Continued.)